

SAN FRANCISCO

# CINEMATHEQUE

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Trinh and Bourdier's *Night Passage*

Ken Jacobs' *Star Spangled to Death*

Tribute to Jean Rouch

Total Mobile Home:

The Ecstasy of Kino Garbology

Dialogues in the Dark:

The Pleasures and Anxieties of Influence

## APPEARANCES BY

Nathaniel Dorsky

Jennifer Fieber

Morgan Fisher

Ernie Gehr

Janie Geiser

Ross Lipman

Kent Long

Nguyen Tan Hoang

Steve Polta

Thad Povey

Rick Prelinger

Charlotte Pryce

Total Mobile Home

Trinh T. Minh-ha and Jean-Paul Bourdier

SPRING 04



RECOGNIZING THAT SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE'S FAME HAS LASTED FAR longer than the requisite 15 minutes—we're now in our 44th year of independent, experimental film and video exhibition—The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts has awarded us a major two-year grant in support of our culturally vital public programs.

This much-appreciated acknowledgement of excellence is significant not only for the financial boost that such a grant brings but also for its philosophical endorsement of our mission and activities. To be recognized in the name of an undisputed giant in our field of avant-garde cinema suggests that we are indeed connecting images and ideas in ways that resonate far beyond the screening room. We are, in fact, creating and critiquing culture through a ceaseless investigation of media-arts work that in turn reflects our collective sense of wonder and individual pursuits of the unknown. To those who choose to counter these lofty explorations with disaffected disdain ("C'mon, it's just a movie")...well, you need to take a chance or two on the moving images that course through Cinematheque's Spring 2004 season.

Hop the train in Trinh and Bourdier's beautiful new narrative feature *Night Passage*, explore landscapes of potential and enjoy excellent adventures in space (in two of our themed programs), illuminate the peripheral with Ross Lipman, and keep your eyes wide open for Rick Prelinger's panorama ephemera. Eavesdrop on **Dialogues in the Dark**, a new series for which contemporary artists pair their works with classics and surprises by their avant-garde forebearers; to begin, Nguyen Tan Hoang, Janie Geiser and Morgan Fisher tussle with the pleasures and anxieties of influence in the light and shadow of Ernie Gehr, Meliès and others. Join in as Fieber meets Polta among landscapes large and small, as Nathaniel Dorsky pays tribute to Stan Brakhage and the sacred realm of devotional cinema, and as we fondly remember French pioneer Jean Rouch. By Independence Day, you'll be ready to light fireworks for Ken Jacobs' incendiary *Star Spangled to Death* (all six-plus hours of it!), but not before immersing yourself in the hand-painted wonder of José Antonio Sistiaga's *Ere Erera Baleibu Icik Subua Arauaren* and bidding farewell (for now) to Total Mobile Home. Be sure, too, to pick up advance tickets for our two co-presentations at this year's San Francisco International Film Festival. Think global, act local, thank Warhol.

Steven Jenkins

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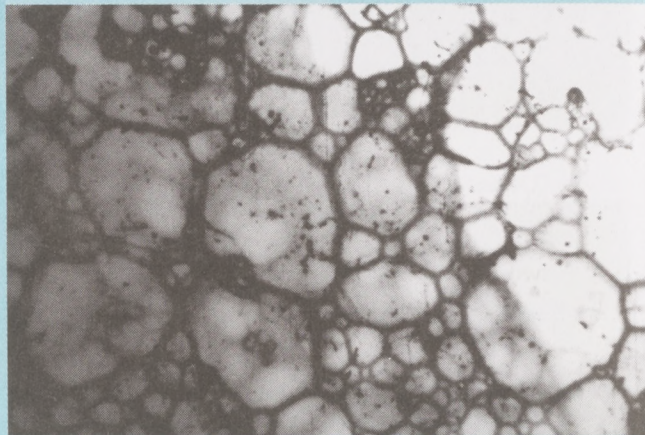
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The Curatorial Committee



Matthias Müller, *Vacancy*, May 6



José Antonio Sistiaga, *Ere Erera Baleibu Icik Subua Arauaren*, June 24



Kurt Kren, *Asyl*, May 2

## SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE

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**Office Manager**  
Steve Polta

**Associate Curator**  
Irina Leimbacher

**Curatorial Committee**  
Maia Cybelle Carpenter  
Irina Leimbacher  
Steve Polta  
Scott Stark  
Konrad Steiner

**Archivist**  
Abby Bridge

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Jeanne C. Finley  
David Libby  
Jane Martin  
Rick Prelinger  
Daniel "Dewey" Schott  
Glen Springer  
Sandeep Vishnu

### Interns and Volunteers

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Elizabeth Block  
Michael Goodier  
SeongSin Jeon  
Ashleigh Louer  
Kim Miskowicz  
Kristin Murtaugh  
Juan Manuel Simon-Barallobre  
Lauren Sorenson  
Jeremiah Stewart  
Rafael Tolentino

### Technicians

Kara Herold  
Marijke Jorritsma  
Steve Polta

### Webmaster

Gilbert Guerrero

### Design

Toki Design

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- one discount admission per screening
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- avant-garde DVD

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- all Cineaste benefits
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145 Ninth Street, Suite 240, San Francisco CA 94103

*Please note that membership dues are not tax-deductible. Donations, however, are fully tax-deductible, and are appreciated any time and for any amount.*

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For up-to-the-minute info, point your browser to [www.sfcinematheque.org](http://www.sfcinematheque.org)

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Orkan Telhan, *On Escape*, May 2



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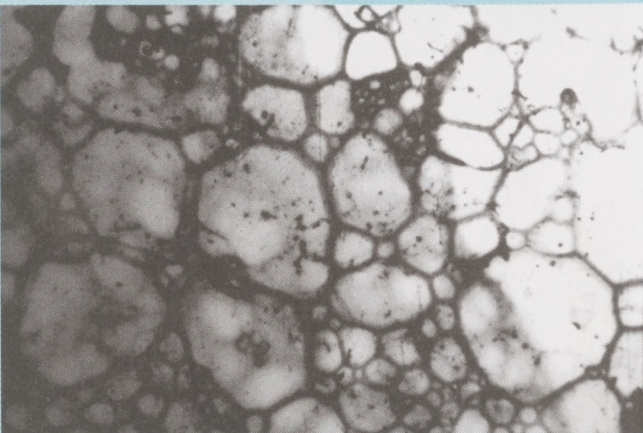
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Notes by program curators.

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Trinh T. Minh-ha and Jean-Paul Bourdier In Person  
Co-presented with Film Arts Foundation

Writer, composer, theorist and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha consistently challenges her audiences with each new work, constantly shifting the ways in which she critically engages with the form and spirit of cinema. Long celebrated for her essay films that transform viewers through their exquisitely articulated deconstruction of our cinematic expectations (*Reassemblage*, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*), she also has worked in experimental narrative. Her newest piece, ***Night Passage***, co-directed with Jean-Paul Bourdier, is a digital tale made in homage to Kenji Miyazawa's novel *Milky Way Railroad*. Three young characters go on a journey into the land of "awakened dreams," moving between the train that carries them and the mysterious places of inner longing and existential reflection in which they stop, each elegantly depicted through a different artistic approach. (*Irina Leimbacher*)

**Thursday, April 15 at 8:00 pm**  
Headlands Center for the Arts Project Space/West, Building 944

**Total Mobile Home: The Ecstasy of Kino Garbology**

Live Film Performance and Installation

Rebecca Barten and David Sherman In Person

Co-presented with Headlands Center for the Arts Artist Talks

For 6:00 pm dinner reservations (\$15 per person) call 415.331.2787 ext. 28 by Tuesday, April 13. For additional information, visit [www.headlands.org](http://www.headlands.org).

Since the early '90s the world's first microCINEMA, San Francisco's Total Mobile Home (TMH)—Rebecca Barten and David Sherman—have periodically procured armloads of deserted institutional films from trashcans behind Bay Area libraries, schools and labs. Says TMH: "It is a strange, sad and beautiful thing to find a 16mm film in a dumpster. It always means that some power-that-is has deemed celluloid obsolete. It is a call for action." During their 2004 residency at Headlands Center for the Arts Project Space, TMH will finally have the time and space to inventory and present this luminous garbage. Composed of unfurled and arranged celluloid strips, film cans, reels and mechanical/natural light projections, the studio becomes an expanded cinema laboratory for synthesizing discoveries, a celebration of daily cine-exhumation. (*Total Mobile Home*) (TMH was an integral part of Cinematheque's Curatorial Committee during 2002-03.)

**Sunday, April 18 at 6:45 pm**  
AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres

**Bringing to Light**

Ernie Gehr, Kent Long, Thad Povey and Charlotte Pryce In Person

Co-presented with Pacific Film Archive and San Francisco International Film Festival

Advance ticket purchase strongly recommended; call 415.561.5012 or visit [www.sffs.org](http://www.sffs.org) for tickets and additional information.

Incorporating keenly wrought observations, plundered educational films, hand-drawn animation, decaying celluloid or an eclectic array of optical techniques, the ten films in our annual co-presentation of recent experimental work bring to light concealed realities and unspoken emotions. Charlotte Pryce's ***Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature***, Julie Murray's *I Began to Wish...* and Thad Povey's *Metaphysical Education* each transform their found footage into provocative existential meditations, while Kent Long's *The Waves* and Jeanne Liotta's *Loretta* use optical printing to highlight form and pattern. Master animator Robert Breer's *What Goes Up*, Brian Frye's *Observations at Gettysburg*, **6 July 2002**, Ernie Gehr's *Passage*, Rebecca Meyers' *glow in the dark (January-june)* and Bill Morrison's *Light is Calling* each, in very distinct ways, highlight the passage of and through time, whether personal, historical or of celluloid itself. (*Kathy Geritz, Irina Leimbacher*)

**Thursday, April 22 at 6:30 pm**  
AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres

**Motion Studies**

Co-presented with San Francisco International Film Festival

Advance ticket purchase strongly recommended; call 415.561.5012 or visit [www.sffs.org](http://www.sffs.org) for tickets and additional information.

This international selection of experimental shorts features manipulations of appropriated footage, creations of alternate parallel worlds and meditations on the meaning of family. Films include *It's Not My Memory of It: Three Recollected Documents* (Julia Meltzer, David Thorne), an investigation of secrecy, memory and classified documents; *Papillon d'amour* (Nicolas Provost), a mesmerizing manipulation of *Rashomon*; *imAgo* (Nikos Veliotis), which questions television's role as a creator of idealized images; *You Define Single File* (Random Touch), a cryptic symbol-laden message from space; *The Greater Vehicle* (Robert Fox), an ode to group salvation through public transport; *Martin* (Bill Basquin), a formal study and a sociological vignette; *Not Too Much Remember* (Tony Gault), exploring the power of storytelling; *Papa Blue* (Charlene Shih), the story of a father and daughter's journeys through depression; and *The Happy Three Family* (Karen Vanderborght), a surreal spin on the biblical tale of The Three Wise Men. (*Maïa Cybelle Carpenter*)

**Sunday, May 2 at 7:30 pm**  
Timken Hall, California College of the Arts

**Excellent Adventures in Visual Space**

Historical panoramas were invented because people wanted to see many times and spaces at once, while cinema has from its inception also been a means to envision a more expansive and more detailed reality. Muybridge's motion studies, Painlevé's seahorses and Brakhage's sea of nameless greens all realize Vertov's KINO EYE, extending human perception. The science of biomimetics tries to get machines to see how humans do, but tonight's artists use cinematic machines to see beyond the human and even induce the sense of a body that you don't have. Featuring Robert Schaller's *My Life as a Bee*, made with a pinhole camera; Kurt Kren's matte box virtuosity in *Asyl*; *Urban Episodes* by Steina, part of her "Machine Vision" series; Orkan Telhan's immersive virtual environment *On Escape*; and going straight from camera obscura to DV, Ernie Gehr's weightless *Glider*. (*Konrad Steiner*)

**Thursday, May 6 at 7:30 pm**  
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Framing Spatial Experiences**

What if film is not necessarily a simulacrum of reality but a way of perceiving the space we inhabit? Our lives are spent on the split-level between forms of architecture and movements of city planning: the inside of the city versus the outside of the city. Tonight's program is a curatorial experiment in reading the abstracted texts of urban spatial dynamics, exploring the notion that architecture equals the art of the frame and that the art of the frame equals film. Challenging the stability of presence and leading us on unexpected paths, these works explore the infamous opposition of architecture and the city planned, the world over. Featuring *Icarus* by Tirtza Even, *Vacancy* by Matthias Müller, *Midtown* by Sarah Morris, *Invisible Cities* by Julio Soto, and works by Ian Toews and Jesper Fabricius. (*Maïa Cybelle Carpenter*)



Trinh and Bourdier, *Night Passage*, April 10



Total Mobile Home, *The Ecstasy of Kino Garbology*, April 15



Charlotte Pryce, *Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature*, April 18

**Sunday, May 9 at 7:30 pm**

Timken Hall, California College of the Arts

**Landscapes of Potential**

"[P]hotographs remind us that landscape is not an act of fate but of human choice, and seem to ask, 'What would you like this landscape to become, bearing in mind what it was and what it is?'" (Philippe Arbaizar). The works in this program focus on re-presenting the "natural" landscape as a site of information exchange. By framing the landscape and its horizon line, the image begins to function as a site of potentials—a virtual space simultaneously inhabiting pasts, presents and futures. Works include David Rimmer's *Local Knowledge*, Oskar Fischinger's *Munich-Berlin Walking Trip*, Steven Topping's *Reading Canada Backwards* and Thomas Comerford's *Shaumberg IL: Figures in the Landscape*. (*Maïa Cybelle Carpenter*)

**Thursday, May 13 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Devotional Cinema: Nathaniel Dorsky on Stan Brakhage's *A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea***

Nathaniel Dorsky In Person

In celebration of Tuumba Press' recent publication of Nathaniel Dorsky's new book *Devotional Cinema* (described by Kathleen Tyner as "a rare treasure of penetrating insight into the language of film...somewhere between a Zen koan and a Victorian love story"), Cinematheque presents *A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea*, the 1991 masterwork by Stan Brakhage, close friend of Dorsky's and easily the most prolific filmmaker in the history of the medium. The first in the epic "Vancouver Island Quartet," a major series of luminous long-form film poems that straddled the final decade of Brakhage's life, *A Child's Garden* is a visual meditation on the land- and seascape of Victoria Island, British Columbia and an imagined biography of Marilyn Brakhage through an envisioning of her childhood there. Dorsky will speak about Brakhage's film and its relation to his notion of devotional cinema. (*Steve Polta*)

**Thursday, May 20 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Dialogues in the Dark: Program One**  
**Re/Callings: An Evening with Nguyen Tan Hoang**

Nguyen Tan Hoang In Person

Co-Presented with National Asian American Telecommunications Association

Nguyen Tan Hoang kicks off **Dialogues in the Dark: The Pleasures and Anxieties of Influence**, a new series for which contemporary media provocateurs pair their own works with those of their avant-garde forebears. Vietnamese-American Hoang makes videos that raucously and provocatively subvert both pop culture and identity politics while simultaneously interrogating forms of desire in queer Asian male identities. Through playful and ironic reappropriations of an eclectic array of images, he explores and explodes various forms of desire, its mediatization and gay subjectivity. Tonight he presents four videos—his probings of homoerotic imagery in *Forever Jimmy!* and *K.I.P.*, and the semi-autobiographically inspired *The Calling* (the priestly and the queer) and *PIRATED!* (boat child meets pirates)—as well as other works that have had an influence on his practice: Cecilia Dougherty's *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, Bruce and Norman Yonemoto's *Vault*, Richard Fung's *Islands*, Robert Blanchon's *Let's Just Kiss + Say Goodbye* and Clover Paek's *We Got Moves You Ain't Even Heard Of (part one)*. (*Irina Leimbacher*)

**Thursday, May 27 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Illuminate the Peripheral: Films by Ross Lipman**

Ross Lipman In Person

Co-presented with Film Arts Foundation

Ross Lipman premieres *The Interview*, a taut psychological narrative exquisitely rendered in muted colors and with a soundtrack worthy of comparison to Bresson's best. Shot during Lipman's years in San

Francisco, it concerns a woman trying to pick up the trail of her past, by chance and through goodwill entering the life of a single mother, herself struggling to create a future in an era of downsizing. We will also be graced by two live performances, first by SF's own Julie Queen, singer and star of *The Interview*, then Lipman's preview of his narrated slide chronicle ***Rotherhithe (Keep Warm. Burn Britain!)***, a slice of lives in the addict/outcast/punk enclave known in anarchist circles as "Squatter's Paradise" in East London. Also screening: ***The Gift—Michael Barrish screen test*** and ***Rhythm 93***. (*Konrad Steiner*)

**Thursday, June 3 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Dialogues in the Dark: Program Two**  
**Invisible Envelopes: An Evening with Janie Geiser**

Janie Geiser In Person

Many of Janie Geiser's films are like cinematic miniatures, evoking ambiguous narratives and cryptic worlds filled with primal yet elusive emotion. Through her delicate and deft animation of found objects, cut-out images and enigmatic female figures, she creates tiny dramas with immense resonance, often drawing from a "noir" sensibility of anxiety and suspense. Tonight we will screen several of Geiser's works, including *Spiral Vessel*, *Immer Zu*, *Lost Motion*, *Ultima Thule*, *The Fourth Watch* and the Bay Area sneak preview of her new ***Terrace 49***. These will be accompanied by films which have inspired or had a formal and emotional impact on her own work, including Ernie Gehr's *Rear Window*, Phil Solomon's *Figure/Ground (The Snowman)*, a short piece by Meliès and other surprises. (*Irina Leimbacher*)

**Sunday, June 6 at 7:30 pm**

Timken Hall, California College of the Arts

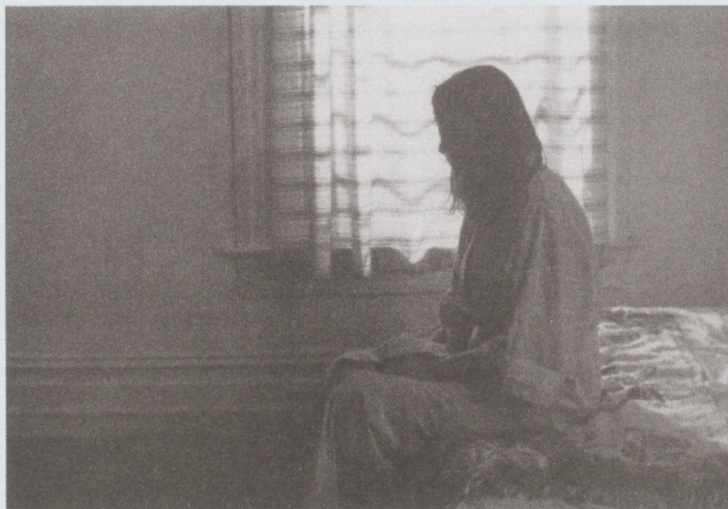
**Dialogues in the Dark: Program Three**  
**The Director Looks at Footage:**  
**A Presentation by Morgan Fisher**

Morgan Fisher In Person

Since the late '60s, Morgan Fisher has made films which foreground the industrial basis of all filmmaking, ironically combining narrative and non-narrative forms and underscoring the common ground between the oft-unreconciled poles of the independently produced "experimental" film and industrially produced commercial product. In his first visit since 1985, Fisher (who has long worked in and been inspired by the film industry) will present his latest film, ***( )***—a rigorously constructed homage to the unsung building block of narrative film language known as the insert shot—in the context of specifically chosen precursors and inspirations, the films --- ----- by Thom Andersen and Malcolm Brodwick, ***Arnulf Rainer*** by Peter Kubelka, and Fisher's own 1974 film ***Cue Rolls***. (*Steve Polta*)



Nguyen Tan Hoang, *PIRATED!*, May 20



Ross Lipman, *The Interview*, May 27



Janie Geiser, *Lost Motion*, June 3



Rick Prelinger, *Panorama Ephemera*, June 13

**Sunday, June 13 at 7:30 pm**

Timken Hall, California College of the Arts

**Rick Prelinger's *Panorama Ephemera***

Rick Prelinger In Person

For more than twenty years, media archaeologist Rick Prelinger has been investigating and interpreting ephemeral media forms, most famously educational and industrial film. Projects such as *Our Secret Century*, *Call It Home* and the *Ephemeral Films* series use this material as a means to expose twentieth-century trends such as the growth of the American middle class, the history of suburbia and the ever-rising tide of advertising and consumerism within postwar capitalism. Tonight, Prelinger presents ***Panorama Ephemera***, which he describes as "a collage of sequences taken from a wide variety of industrial, advertising, educational and amateur films which traverses the conflicted landscapes of twentieth-century America and lets the films' often skewed visions construct a new American history that begins and ends in unexpected places." (*Steve Polta*)

**Thursday, June 17 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Landscapes Large and Small:**  
**Films by Jennifer Fieber and Steve Polta**

Jennifer Fieber and Steve Polta In Person

Former San Francisco resident Jennifer Fieber returns from New York for her first in-person screening, joined by Cinematheque staffer, filmmaker and audio artist Steve Polta. The luminous landscapes and abstracted urban structures of Fieber's films resonate with a disquieting tranquility, while Polta transposes his rhythmic and sometimes rancorous audio syncopations with sensuous renderings of micro-landscapes. Fieber will show her films ***Letters are Yellow***, ***Dual16***, ***Their Idols Disintegrate*** and her work-in-progress ***Swiss Alps***. Polta will screen four new silent works, including the 16mm film ***Minnesota Landscape***; three super-8 films: ***The Berries***, ***2001 in Oakland*** and ***Interval Oakland 99***, all silent; and two older super-8 sound films: ***Estuary #1*** and ***1997C (Red Sketch)***. (*Scott Stark*)

**Thursday, June 24 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**José Antonio Sistiaga's *Ere Erera Baleibu Icik Subua Arauaren***

Sponsored by the Consulate General of Spain, San Francisco

Known throughout Europe for his wildly gestural, vibrantly colored abstract paintings, Basque artist José Antonio Sistiaga treats color and light as raw materials and sole subject matter in his large-scale immersive canvases, expressing a vigorous and confrontational attitude towards free and direct sensual experience. While actively painting since the 1950s, Sistiaga has since the '60s assembled an equally masterful body of film work, virtually unknown in the United States. Tonight we screen Sistiaga's 1970 masterpiece and best-known film ***Ere Erera Baleibu Icik Subua Arauaren***. Meticulously hand-painted over the course of two years, the film is a silent, continuously transforming seventy-minute experience of pure vibrating light and rolling texture—screened tonight as a brand new print, in all its 35mm Cinemascope glory! (*Steve Polta*)

**Thursday, July 1 at 7:30 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**A Tribute to Jean Rouch: *Jaguar (The First Road Movie)***

Jean Rouch made hundreds of films, initiated a collaborative form of ethnographic cinema, was seminal for the French New Wave and coined the term *cinéma vérité* with Edgar Morin in *Chronicle of a Summer*. He died in a car accident in Niger this year at the age of 86. As a tribute to his crucial role in breaking down borders between fact and fiction and acknowledging the power of improvisation, we present his early masterpiece and perhaps the first road movie, ***Jaguar*** (1954/67). Three Africans set off from rural Niger in search of jobs and adventure. Reaching the Gold Coast (now Ghana) shortly before the end of colonialism, they work in the ports, in the lumber trade or as market sellers, and become "jaguar," or "cool." As Rouch said, "*Jaguar* was fun...we made it up as we went along." (*Irina Leimbacher*)

**Saturday, July 3 at 2:00 pm**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Ken Jacobs' *Star Spangled to Death***

Co-presented with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Screening of this six-and-a-half hour film will run from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, pause for a dinner break, and continue from 6:30 to 10:00 pm.

***Star Spangled to Death*** (1957/59-2003, 16mm film transferred to video) is Ken Jacobs' legendary and monumental paean to the patfalls of patriotism and the mind-numbing consequences of conventional wisdom. Found materials as diverse as Nixon's "Checkers" speech, a Warner Brothers short publicizing the NRA, a neo-colonialist documentary about white explorers among African "savages," cartoons, scientific films and many others are interspersed with clips of a young (pre-*Flaming Creatures*) Jack Smith and Jerry Sims making public spectacles of themselves in a variety of outrageous and devilishly costumed performances. Shown in several versions since the late 1950s, the piece contains in its current version many new clips and is now considered by Jacobs to be "final." *SSTD* is a delirious, urbane and thoroughly entertaining diatribe about America's proud, willful and lethal rush toward cultural and political self-delusion. (*Scott Stark*)



Morgan Fisher, *( )*, June 6

## Venues

**AMC Kabuki 8 Theatres**  
1881 Post Street at Fillmore  
415.561.5012  
[www.sffs.org](http://www.sffs.org)

**California College of the Arts**  
1111 Eighth Street at Irwin  
near 16th and Wisconsin Streets  
415.703.9500  
[www.coarts.edu](http://www.coarts.edu)

**Headlands Center for the Arts**  
Project Space/West, Building 944  
415.331.2787 ext. 28  
[www.headlands.org](http://www.headlands.org)

**San Francisco Art Institute**  
800 Chestnut Street at Jones  
415.771.7020  
[www.sanfranciscoart.edu](http://www.sanfranciscoart.edu)

**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts**  
701 Mission Street at Third  
415.978.2787  
[www.yerbabuenaarts.org](http://www.yerbabuenaarts.org)

(UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

- \$7 General
- \$4 Members, Students (with ID), Disabled, Seniors
- CCA students admitted free to CCA screenings
- SFAI students admitted free to SFAI screenings